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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 28 April 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia concerning the Russian Foreign Minister's visit to Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alexander Lomaia
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

**Annex to the identical letters dated 28 April 2011 from the
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the
Security Council**

**Statement issued on 28 April 2011 by the Georgian Ministry of
Foreign Affairs on the Russian Foreign Minister's visit to
Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region**

On 25 and 26 April 2011, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, went on a "regional tour" of Georgia's occupied territories — Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region.

The Russian Foreign Minister held meetings with the leaders of the occupying regimes and signed agreements with the latter — agreements which, according to international law, are as null and void as any other agreement or document concluded between an occupying country and the occupying regimes it has set up.

It is both ironic and regrettable that a high-ranking Russian diplomat has had to stage such a comical spectacle as a visit to Georgia's occupied territories and meetings with the proxy leaders of the regimes which occupy them. The grotesque nature of this pathetic performance was further heightened by Mr. Lavrov being decorated by Mr. Kokoity, a notorious criminal.

Such official "visits" to a sovereign country's occupied territories — reminiscent of the style of Soviet political leaders — could be viewed as a cynical provocation, as, in carrying out such visits, Russia seems to be demonstrating that it never intended to comply with the commitments it undertook under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008, in demonstrative defiance of universally recognized norms and principles of international law. At the same time, the Kremlin is trying to create at least an illusion of legitimacy on behalf of the occupying regimes — particularly considering the fact that, despite Russia's consistent efforts and financial generosity, its policy of recognition of the breakaway regions as subjects of international law has met with complete failure.

Equally cynical is the claim that Russia allegedly intends to protect the occupying regimes it set up on Georgia's occupied territories from "further aggression" by Georgia. Mr. Lavrov clearly needs to be reminded that the international community praised Georgia's undertaking to commit to the non-use of force, and that it demands the same from Russia despite the latter country's insistent refusal to do so. Through its militarization of the territories it occupies — including the deployment of multiple-launch rocket systems — it is Russia which poses a threat to peace and stability in the South Caucasus and Black Sea regions.

It is high time for the Kremlin to realize that the present-day world will no more tolerate the redrawing of an internationally recognized sovereign country's borders by force than it would policies of ethnic cleansing, occupation and annexation. The establishment of equal relations based upon the norms and principles of international law — which call for a full withdrawal from Georgia's occupied territories — would suit the interests of both countries.